

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

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5 1. A removable core for supporting a pre-stretched elastomeric tube in a radially expanded condition comprising:

a tube having a first end and a second end,

at least one primary line of localized weakening starting at the first end and terminating at the second end of the tube, and

10 a plurality of substantially parallel secondary lines of localized weakening, wherein each secondary weakening line extends from the at least one primary weakening line at the one side thereof to a termination point at the other side of the at least one primary weakening line and spaced apart therefrom and wherein adjacent secondary weakening lines alternately extend from the at least one primary weakening line to termination points on opposite sides of the at least one primary weakening line to define at least one strip beginning at the first end of the tube and continuing substantially in a  
15 serpentine manner to the second end of the tube.

20 2. The removable core according to claim 1, wherein the at least one strip comprises a free end starting from the second end of the tube and extending through the tube so as to project from the first end of the tube.

3. The removable core according to claim 1, wherein each secondary weakening line extends substantially circumferentially about the tube.

25 4. The removable core according to claim 1, wherein the at least one primary weakening line extends alternately to opposite lateral sides of a straight phantom line.

30 5. The removable core according to claim 4, wherein the at least one primary weakening line extends symmetrically to the phantom line.

6. The removable core according to claim 1, wherein the at least one primary weakening line has a periodical corrugated, zig-zag-shaped, triangular, rectangular, or trapezoidal wave form.

5 7. The removable core according to claim 1, wherein for all of the secondary weakening lines the distance in circumferential direction by which a termination point of a secondary weakening line is spaced from the at least one primary weakening line is constant.

10 8. The removable core according to claim 3, wherein for all of the secondary weakening lines the distance in circumferential direction by which a termination point of a secondary weakening line is spaced from the at least one primary weakening line is smaller than a width defined by two successive outermost locations of the at least one primary weakening line arranged on opposite lateral sides of the phantom line.

15 9. The removable core according to claim 8, wherein the distance is substantially the width of the strip within its portions close to the termination points.

20 10. The removable core according to claim 1, wherein the tube at the termination points of the secondary weakening lines is provided with radially extending holes.

25 11. The removable core according to claim 1, wherein the overall extension of the at least one primary weakening line is inclined with respect to a longitudinal dimension of the tube.

12. The removable core according to claim 1, wherein the primary and secondary weakening lines are comprised of perforations in the tube.

13. The removable core according to claim 1, wherein the tube along its primary and secondary weakening lines has a reduced thickness in relation to the remaining parts of the tube.

5 14. The removable core according to claim 1, wherein the primary and secondary weakening lines are formed by ablation of material of the tube by means of a laser or electron beam, plasma or fluid jet application or by means of mechanically cutting of the tube.

10 15. A removable core for supporting a pre-stretched elastomeric tube in a radially expanded condition comprising

a tube having first and second opposite ends,

15 at least two primary lines of localized weakening starting at the first end and terminating at the second end of the tube, and spaced apart in circumferential dimension of the tube, and

20 a plurality of substantially parallel secondary lines of localized weakening, wherein each secondary weakening line extends substantially circumferentially of the tube between two adjacent primary weakening lines from one primary weakening line to a termination point spaced apart from the other primary weakening line and wherein adjacent secondary weakening lines between two respective adjacent primary weakening lines alternately extend from different primary weakening lines to termination points spaced apart from the respective other primary weakening line to define at least two strips each beginning at the first end of the tube and substantially circumferentially continuing in a serpentine manner to the second end of the tube.

25 16. The removable core according to claim 15, wherein the at least two strips each comprise a free end starting from the second end of the tube and extending through the tube so as to project from the first end of the tube.

17. The removable core according to claim 15, wherein each secondary weakening line extends substantially circumferentially of the tube.

18. The removable core according to claim 15, wherein each of the at least two weakening lines extends alternately to opposite lateral sides of a straight phantom line.

19. The removable core according to claim 18, wherein each of the at least two weakening lines extends symmetrically to the respective phantom line.

20. The removable core according to claim 17, wherein each of the at least two weakening lines has a periodical corrugated, zig-zag-shaped, triangular, rectangular, or trapezoidal wave form.

21. The removable core according to claim 17, wherein for all of the secondary weakening lines the distance in circumferential direction by which a termination point of a secondary weakening line is spaced from the respective one of the at least two weakening lines is constant.

22. The removable core according to claim 18, wherein for all of the secondary weakening lines the distance in circumferential direction by which a termination point of a secondary weakening line is spaced from the respective one of the at least two weakening lines is smaller than a width defined by two successive outermost locations of the respective one of the at least two weakening lines arranged on opposite lateral sides of the respective phantom line.

23. The removable core according to claim 22, wherein the distance is substantially the width of the strip within its portions close to the termination points.

24. The removable core according to claim 17, wherein the tube at the termination points of the secondary weakening lines is provided with radially extending holes.

25. The removable core according to claim 17, wherein the overall extension of each of the at least two weakening lines is inclined with respect to a longitudinal dimension of the tube.

5 26. The removable core according to claim 17, wherein the primary and secondary weakening lines are comprised of perforations in the tube.

10 27. The removable core according to claim 17, wherein the tube along its primary and secondary weakening lines has a reduced thickness in relation to the remaining parts of the tube.

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15 28. The removable core according to claim 17, wherein the primary and secondary weakening lines are formed by ablation of material of the tube by means of a laser or electron beam, plasma or fluid jet application or by means of mechanically cutting of the tube.

20 29. A removable core for supporting a pre-stretched elastomeric tube in a radially expanded condition comprising

a unitary tube having first and second opposite ends,

a plurality of sections of a primary line of localized weakening spaced apart and arranged adjacent to each other wherein the arrangement of the plurality of primary weakening line sections extends from the first end of the tube to the second end thereof and

25 a plurality of substantially parallel secondary lines of localized weakening, a group of the secondary weakening lines being associated to each of the primary weakening line sections, respectively, wherein each secondary weakening line of the group extends from the associated primary weakening line section at the one side thereof to a termination point at the other side of the respective primary weakening line section and spaced apart therefrom,  
30 wherein adjacent secondary weakening lines of the group extend from the

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cont.

5                    respective primary weakening line section at different sides thereof to  
termination points at the respective other side of the respective primary  
weakening line section, and wherein from one end of a respective primary  
weakening line section there extends a secondary weakening line at the one  
side of this primary weakening line section to an opposite end of an  
adjacent primary weakening line section at the other side thereof to define a  
strip beginning at the first end of the tube and continuing substantially in a  
serpentine manner within the areas of the plurality of primary weakening  
line sections and continuing substantially helically between respective  
10                   adjacent primary weakening line sections to the second end of the tube the  
strip comprising a free end starting from the second end of the tube and  
extending through the tube so as to project from the first end of the tube.

15                   30.     The removable core according to claim 29, wherein opposite ends of two respective  
adjacent primary weakening line sections are located at opposite lateral sides of a phantom  
line.

20                   31.     The removable core according to claim 29, wherein two respective adjacent  
primary weakening line sections are curved in opposite directions.

25                   32.     The removable core according to claim 30, wherein the opposite ends of two  
respective adjacent primary weakening line sections are displaced in a substantially  
circumferential direction and are in alignment with respect to each other.

30                   33.     The removable core according to claim 29, wherein the secondary weakening lines  
extending from one primary weakening line section to an adjacent one comprises at least  
one winding around the tube.

30                   34.     The removable core according to claim 29, wherein each secondary weakening line  
extends substantially circumferentially of the tube.

35. The removable core according to claim 29, wherein the arrangement of the plurality of primary weakening line sections extends alternately to opposite lateral sides of a phantom line.

5 36. The removable core according to claim 35, wherein the phantom line is a straight line and is substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the core.

37. The removable core according to claim 35, wherein the arrangement of the plurality of primary weakening line sections extends symmetrically to the phantom line.

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38. The removable core according to claim 29, wherein the arrangement of the plurality of primary weakening line sections has a periodical corrugated, zig-zag-shaped, triangular, rectangular, or trapezoidal wave form.

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39. The removable core according to claim 29, wherein for all of the secondary weakening lines the distance in circumferential direction by which a termination point of a secondary weakening line is spaced from the at least one primary weakening line is constant.

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40. The removable core according to claim 29, wherein for all of the secondary weakening lines the distance in circumferential direction by which a termination point of a secondary weakening line is spaced from a primary weakening line sections is smaller than a width defined by two successive outermost locations of the arrangement of the plurality of primary weakening line sections arranged on opposite lateral sides of the phantom line.

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41. The removable core according to claim 40, wherein the distance is substantially the width of the strip within its portions close to the termination points.

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42. The removable core according to claim 29, wherein the tube at the termination points of the secondary weakening lines is provided with radially extending holes.

43. The removable core according to claim 29, wherein the overall extension of the arrangement of the plurality of primary weakening line sections is inclined with respect to a longitudinal dimension of the tube.

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44. The removable core according to claim 29, wherein the primary and secondary weakening lines are comprised of perforations in the tube.

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45. The removable core according to claim 29, wherein the tube along its primary and secondary weakening lines has a reduced thickness in relation to the remaining parts of the tube.

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46. The removable core according to claim 29, wherein the secondary weakening lines extending from one primary weakening line section to an adjacent one comprises at least one winding along the tube.

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